

CMS Software Distribution on the LCG and OSG Grids

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Abstract

The efficient exploitation of worldwide distributed storage and computing resources available in the grids require a robust, transparent and fast deployment of experiment specific software. The approach followed by the CMS experiment at CERN in order to enable Monte-Carlo simulations, data analysis and software development in an international collaboration is presented. The current status and future improvement plans are described.

INTRODUCTION

The CMS (Compact Muon Solenoid) experiment [1, 2] of high energy physics is located in an underground cavern at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) currently under construction at CERN, Geneva, Switzerland [3]. The international collaboration tackling the difficult task of constructing and running the complex detector weighing 12.5 tons comprises about 2000 scientists and engineers from 160 institutions in 37 countries. With an expected recording rate of 150 events per second and event sizes of about 1.5 MB the huge amount of 1500 TB of collected data per year has to be distributed on grids in order to be stored and analyzed. The efficient exploitation of the worldwide distributed data and the computing resources available in the grids require a robust, transparent and fast deployment of the experiment specific software that, especially in the start-up phase, will be rapidly developing. The approach followed by the CMS experiment in order to achieve this goal is presented, the current status of the implementations within the LHC Computing Grid (LCG) [4, 5] and the Open Science Grid (OSG) [6, 7] and future improvement plans are described.

SOFTWARE PREPARATION

Before the rapidly developing experiment software can be distributed a couple of preparatory steps have to be per-

formed. They are listed in the following together with a short explanation and, if applicable, the solution adopted by CMS:

1. **Release:** The final content of a project has to be fixed. Within CMS the software projects are managed by SCRAM (Software Configuration, Release And Management) [8], the collection of the latest updates is done via NICOS (Nightly Control System) [9]. See also reference [10].
2. **Packaging:** All software components have to be packaged in archives suited for distribution on grids. CMS adopted the RPM (Red Hat Package Manager) [11] format, see also [12].
3. **Testing:** A test installation has to be performed followed up by a validation.
4. **Archiving:** All produced packages have to be backed up, for CMS they are stored on tapes managed by CASTOR (CERN Advanced Storage Manager) [13, 14].
5. **Web/Grid Storage:** The validated software archives have to be put into a repository accessible by web or grid tools. CMS employs a web server for this task, in addition the archived copies on CASTOR can be accessed via grid tools.
6. **Publication:** New releases ready for distribution have to be announced. This is done using the same web server as for the repository.
7. **Mirroring:** Ideally, to avoid overloading the primary repository, mirrors should be set up.

SOFTWARE DISTRIBUTION

Generic View

Once the software has been prepared and the required services have been set up the actual distribution on the grids

can start. In figure 1 a generic view on the related services and their interconnections is presented. The software distribution service, where the rectangular box provides some more details, consists of the four basic steps: Submission, installation, validation and publication. In comparison to local software installations additional grid services come into play. To avoid misuse or unintended destructive actions the submission, which might be initiated in a managed or automated manner, has to be authorized for access to the software storage area. In addition, information retrieved from a bookkeeping service can prevent unwanted (or double) submissions. The next two steps are similar to the point "Testing" of the software preparation section with the added complication that the actions have to be registered. In parallel to the distribution of new releases the current status of all participating grid sites is monitored so that changes in availability or e.g. deteriorated systems can be reported to an error treatment service and the entries in the bookkeeping are updated correspondingly. At the same time the monitoring can be used to trigger installation submissions of new releases in an automated manner. Any other problems occurring for example in the installation or validation phases are reported to the error treatment as well.

Implementation within LCG

Within the LHC Computing Grid the whole chain of submission, installation, validation and publication is performed by the tool XCMSI [15, 16], the publication occurs according to the GLUE (Grid Laboratory Uniform Environment) scheme [4, 17]. XCMSI also comprises a monitoring service allowing automated submissions but no dedicated bookkeeping apart from a simple web page, more details can be found in the section on monitoring and bookkeeping. The submissions are authorized using X509 grid certificates of the mapping account `cmssgm` of the experiment software manager (ESM). The only means of error treatment currently implemented is the Savannah web page of the XCMSI project [18].

Implementation within OSG

In the Open Science Grid the software installations are submitted from the CMS Software Deployment GUI (Graphical User Interface) by an experiment software manager again authorized by X509 grid certificates for the role of `cmssoft`. The installation is done with XCMSI like within LCG, to validate the software, however, a series of Monte-Carlo production jobs is run employing the Monte-Carlo Production Service (MCPS) [19]. The result is published in the GLUE scheme as well as in the dedicated bookkeeping database CMSSoftDB [20]. A continuous monitoring has not been foreseen, the only available error treatment is again the XCMSI Savannah page.

Comparison

In general the experience from the Data Challenge 04 [21] has lead to rather similar setups of the software deployment on the LCG and OSG grids. Some components, especially the validation procedures and the escalation handling in case of problems, have to be further developed.

MONITORING AND BOOKKEEPING

As can be seen from figure 1 the task of software deployment is not considered to be completed after just one initial distribution of a new release. The current status has to be monitored continuously in order to update the published information on grid sites according to the actual situation and to take preventive measures in case of problems. Within LCG the basic availability of a grid site and the correct functioning of the corresponding compute and storage elements is already monitored in the framework of the site functional tests (SFT). In principal it is possible to add experiment specific tests on the installed software as well which would have the additional advantage that the jobs are run in privileged (express) queues. If a validation, however, requires that files within the experiment software area are modified or created it would be necessary that not only the experiment software manager but also the SFTs run by the LCG integration team (dteam) are authorized to have write access. The same would be required if the monitoring is not only run in a passive testing mode but also in active mode that allows known problems to be fixed automatically or that even submits installation jobs for new releases. Since this is not very desirable a better solution should be found to prioritize software monitoring and installation jobs of the experiment software manager with respect to normal ones. This could be implemented for example in the framework of the Virtual Organization Membership Service (VOMS) where it is possible to attribute different authorizations and prioritizations to a grid certificate depending on the role the submitter assumes [4].

The aforementioned XCMSI project contains a monitoring tool that is already run regularly (in unprivileged queues though) in order to run CMS specific tests e.g. to check the read/write permissions of the experiment software area, the CMS attributed architecture (operating system) of the compute element, the availability of the RPM database of installed packages and the accessibility of the published software projects. The collected data are published in the form of a web page presenting also some additional information on the outcome of the last test and a history file containing the past test results.

A dedicated database to gather all the data in a nicely structured format is desirable. This would also improve the capabilities of the automated installation prototype contained in the XCMSI monitoring that currently relies on GLUE tag information like `V0-cms-PROJECT-request-install` alone. Such a database has been implemented within the OSG: CMSSoftDB [20]. It is based on a MySQL [22] database

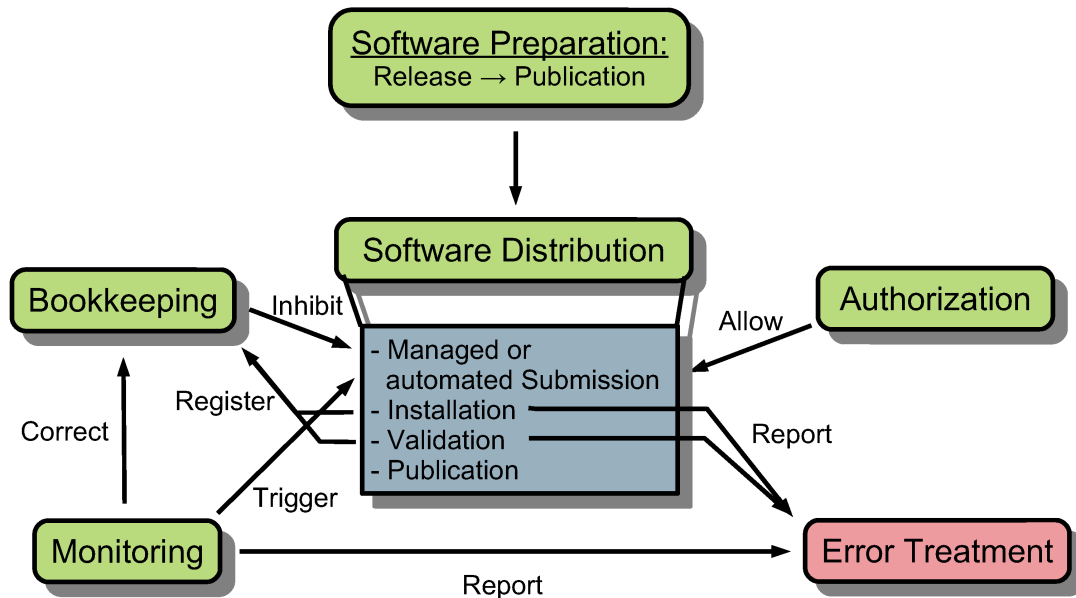


Figure 1: A generic view showing the required services in order to prepare, distribute and maintain experiment specific software on a grid. Labelled arrows indicate their interconnections, the rectangular box provides some more details on the software distribution service.

and provides i.a. a comprehensive overview of the CMS software installation status in the Open Science Grid. It is accessible via a web interface, the CMS Software Deployment GUI [23, 24], that not only presents the collected information in the database but also allows authorized users to perform actions like job submissions or other management tasks. The database is not coupled to a continuous monitoring though.

OUTLOOK

A lot of progress has been made compared to the situation during the Data Challenge 04. CMS can deploy the experiment specific software, distribute and analyze data and monitor the software status on the grids. The interoperability between LCG and OSG has been improved as well but some work remains to be done, especially a more consistent look onto the available information for users in the two grids should be achieved. Concerning monitoring and bookkeeping the efforts made within LCG and OSG could be nicely merged. Dedicated CPU/time slots for the ESM role are a must, but this can easily be done within the VOMS roles. The most important points remaining to be addressed are the error handling and escalation procedures as well as better validation suites.

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